



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Maryland Pimp Federally Indicted for Trafficking Four Juveniles, Including One Twelve-Year- Old, Into the District of Columbia for Prostitution**

**Washington, D.C.** - A federal grand jury in the District of Columbia has returned a nine-count indictment charging Shelby S. Lewis, 42, of Temple Hills, Maryland, with five counts of Sex Trafficking of Children and four counts of Interstate Transportation of a Minor for Purposes of Prostitution, announced Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips and Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office Joseph Persichini, Jr. If convicted, defendant Lewis faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The indictment stems from information obtained during an undercover operation conducted by the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department's Prostitution Enforcement Unit in late May 2009, that ultimately showed that Lewis was allegedly bringing juveniles into the District of Columbia for the purposes of prostitution between 2006 and 2009. During the MPD operation, a fourteen-year-old girl and a sixteen-year-old girl were arrested near 14<sup>th</sup> and K Streets, N.W., when they attempted to solicit an undercover officer. Thereafter, it was determined that defendant Lewis was acting as the girls' "pimp."

At about this same time, a girl who had been reported missing to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at the age of thirteen was separately located, and it was determined that Lewis had prostituted her for over three years. A fourth juvenile victim was also found, who had worked for Lewis for approximately two years, from the time that she was twelve years old.

After the girls were identified, a search warrant was executed at Mr. Lewis' home, which led to the seizure of numerous items consistent with Mr. Lewis' prostitution business, including a firearm and photographs of numerous victims. Mr. Lewis was arrested on June 19, 2009, and initially was charged under D.C. law with Pandering of a Juvenile.

In announcing today's indictment, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips and Assistant Director Persichini praised the efforts of the Metropolitan Police Department's Prostitution Enforcement

Unit, and Youth Investigation Branch Detective Jonathan Andrews, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation Washington Field Office. They also commended D.C. Assistant Attorney General Anthony DeLeon, the Maryland and the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Forces, and the Polaris Project. Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips and Assistant Director Persichini also praised the work of USAO Victim Witness Advocate Veronica Vaughan, Paralegal Teesha Tobias and Legal Assistant Jacqueline Akyea for their administrative support, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Roy L. Austin, Jr. and Bridgette Crafton, who are prosecuting the case.

An Indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of criminal laws and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.

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